

Storytelling: Shapes & Lines

By Danette Boswell | Edmond, OK

[24 Works on Paper](#)

Summary

1. **Big Idea and/or Question(s):** Have you ever told a story with art? How can we use shapes and lines to tell a story in a picture?
2. **Medium(s):** Acrylic paint, stamping, paper
3. **Grade Levels:** K-2nd grade (and up)
4. **Time Breakdown:** Approx. 1-hour lesson
(*Video—20 minutes; Activity—30 minutes; Discussion and Wrap-Up—10 minutes*)
Approximately 15 to 20 minutes

Materials

- Construction, scrapbook, or other heavy-weight paper
- Tissue paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Acrylic or washable paint
- Objects to stamp with – cups, bowls, or blocks
- Pencils
- Paint pens or regular markers

Optional Materials: ruler, additional household items to stamp with, like forks or Lego pieces

Video

a. **Introduction:**

Hi! My name is Danette Boswell and I am from Edmond, Oklahoma. I have been an artist since I was a little girl and I enjoy creating with acrylic paint and pulp fiber. Pulp fiber is used to create all sorts of things like beads, sculptures, and handmade paper.

b. **Present a Big Idea and/or ask an Essential Question:**

Have you ever told a story without using words? In our artwork, how do you think we could use shapes and lines to tell a story? Look around you right now, what shapes do you see? Do you see any lines?

c. **Show an Artwork that Relates to the Idea/Question:**

In my artwork titled, *A Different Path*, I used shapes and lines to tell a story. A path is a course or direction a person or thing is moving. Sometimes paths are straight, like sidewalks and roads. But, other times, paths can wind in circles like around a mountain or be unpredictable like in a maze. In my artwork, I wanted to show how the path I am taking in my life is different from those around me. Where some of my friends and family may like the structure of straight lines and predictable squares and rectangles, I prefer to go in winding directions, sometimes even circles. My path in life has been different and unique to me, so I chose to use shapes and lines in my artwork to express how even though we all may take different paths in life through our ideas and choices, the important thing is that we are all moving forward.

Let's think more about shapes and lines. Look at these shapes. I bet you may already know the names of some of these. Which shapes do you like the best? Now, let's look at lines. Notice how some lines are straight, curvy, or zig-zag. Have you ever played Hopscotch? Think about the shapes and lines you see when you jump from square to square.

d. **Assign an Activity to Investigate the Idea/Question:**

So, today I want you to think about shapes and lines you could use to tell a story. What do you want your artwork to represent or show? Maybe it could tell something about you, like something you love to do or like to eat? Have you ever been on a trip where you saw something you loved? Like the ocean, a city, or a pretty sunset? What are your favorite shapes? Maybe you like sports and could use spheres or circles to represent basketball, soccer, or softball. Maybe you love art, dance, or computers. Think about the story you'd like to tell about yourself as we gather our supplies.

Today, you will need construction or heavy-weight paper, scrapbook and/or tissue paper, scissors, glue or a glue stick, acrylic or washable paint, and objects to stamp with. You could use everyday items like pencils, cups, or bowls for stamping. You could also use paint markers, Sharpies, or regular markers to draw lines.

Let's get started!

First: Draw, paint or cut out some shapes and glue them to a piece of construction or heavy-weight paper. Remember to think of the story you want to tell. Maybe you'd like to tell a story about yourself, a place you've been before, or what you'd like to do when you grow up.

(Model cutting out and gluing shapes down in a collage.)

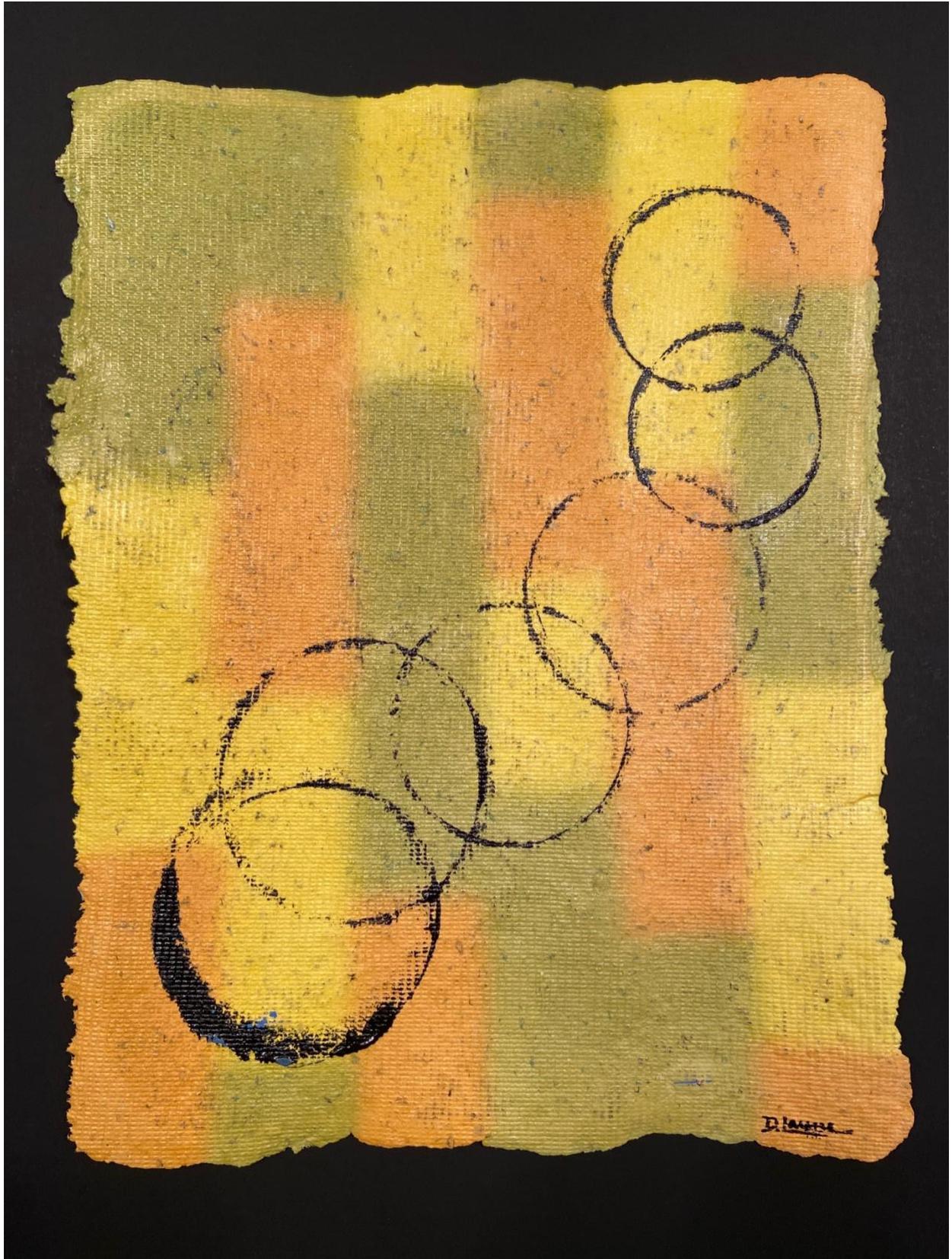
Next: After you have drawn or glued down the shapes, you can now paint, draw or stamp lines to add visual interest or connect your shapes. Sometimes lines can serve to enhance or draw attention to a certain part of your artwork. What do you think is the most important shape or section of your art? Could you use a line to highlight that important part of your artwork?

(Show how to stamp with objects or draw lines with paint markers)

Last: After your artwork has had time to dry, tell someone else about your art. Describe and name the shapes you included. What colors are in your artwork? Point out the lines you added. What story does your artwork tell about you?"

e. **Wrap-Up:**

I loved making art with you today and telling stories using shapes and lines. I encourage you to continue to grow as an artist. As you go throughout your day today, take time to notice the shapes and lines around you...in your classroom, home, and even outside in nature. Think about how all those shapes and lines add to the story you're living in right now. Thank you for joining me today – keep expressing yourself through your artwork and telling your stories!



Danette Boswell, *A Different Path*, 2022. Acrylic on hand-dyed pulp fiber. 20"x16".